

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

13 AUG 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Assessment of Possible Soviet Threats to Satellite
Reconnaissance

- References: a. DNRO memo for DCI, subject as above, dated
19 Dec 62 (BYE 4395-62)
- b. DD(R) memo for DNRO, subject as above, dated
7 Jan 63 [] with OSI prepared
attachment []

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In reference a, the former Director, NRO requested a written summary of the present assessment of threats of physical counteraction by the Soviets against our reconnaissance satellites, to include all known details as to the technical characteristics of the equipment, the type and method of the possible attacks, and the locations from which these attacks are most likely to be made. Reference b forwarded a preliminary summary of the OSI assessment, which was discussed in more detail by CIA representatives at a West Coast NRO vulnerability meeting held 9-10 Jan 1963.

I am currently reviewing the existing NRO efforts in the satellite vulnerability field, and am in process of developing a detailed contingency plan. The plan will serve to focus our several developmental efforts as well as to assure an existing capability for some type of counteraction at the earliest feasible time. In this connection, it is, of course, vitally important that this plan and related R&D program be oriented on the basis of the latest and most complete factual information available concerning the possible threat.

The assessment of reference b was described as preliminary, due to the short time available between the request of reference a and the meeting on 9-10 Jan, although I have not received any subsequent revision. Also, I understand that the discussion at this meeting

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raised some questions in regard to the capability ascribed by reference b to the TALL KING radars. Accordingly, I would like a written summary of the present assessment of the threat for use in developing the NRO contingency plan and related R&D vulnerability program.



Brockway McMillan
Director
National Reconnaissance Office

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BYE 5320-63, dated 13 August 1963

Chronology:

On 14 August this document was sent to DD/S&T via DDCI to prepare answer.

On 3 September O/ExecDir checked with DD/S&T. Was advised that they had suspended it for Friday.

On 4 September DD/S&T advised they would need another week.

On 18 September was advised it was on Dr. Wheelon's desk for signature.

On 27 September it was still on Dr. Wheelon's desk (he wasn't satisfied with it).

Two weeks in a row O/ExecDir checked with O/DDS&T but the secretary had to leave the phone and did not return the call either time.

STAT

On 17 October Jack Blake returned it (Mr. Kirkpatrick had given it to Jack Blake to try to speed it up) saying it was OSI action.

Mr. Kirkpatrick prompted Dr. Wheelon on 5 November.

It was received in ER on _____.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY		STAT	
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1	Executive Director	2 Dec	
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ACTION		DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY
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OK for dispatch but a disgraceful delay in response which could lay a delayed program back in our lap -		STAT	
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